Dewan-President of the Council had been consistently whittling down the powers of the Council under the Regulation and the Rules. Interpellations were not properly answered. Inconvenient interpellations were generally disallowed. There was no elected Deputy President to the Council, though in the Cochin Legislative Council, which was of later origin, the Deputy President was elected.

The British Government were proposing to give up diarchy in Provinces and to introduce full responsible government. The member requested that at least the diarchy system might be introduced in the State. The system had been tried in British India with advantage. The administration of the State should be in the hands of ministers who should be made responsible to the Legislature and should be removable by the majority of the Council. Matters relating to treaty relations, such as the army, subsidy, railway, tariff, etc., might be reserved by the Dewan and the other matters transferred to the ministers. Adult suffrage should be introduced and the practice of nominating the members entirely abolished. The Council should have its President elected by the members themselves.

It was gratifying that His Highness the Maha Raja had announced that the Assembly would be reformed and placed on a statutory basis. The Assembly had been useful to the people in various ways. But it had outlived its usefulness as a result of the reform of the Legislative Council, the creation of Municipal Councils, etc. The Assembly had now become a congregation of petitioners. There was no need for a bi-cameral Legislature in the State and it would be a waste of public funds to create an upper house, and give a further lease of life to this unwanted institution. Nobody would be benefited by the reform of the Assembly on the model of the Legislative Council. It would be more beneficial to amalgamate the Assembly and the Legislative Council into a Parliament and to appoint ministers responsible to the Parliament.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Visvanatha Pillai, political reforms will undoubtedly come in, and, when the new schemes have been worked out, your suggestions will be considered.

188. Some constructive suggestions to improve the defective constitution of the present representative institutions in the State so as to enable them to effect an efficient administration by means of an elected ministry, responsible to the Dewan assisted by an Executive Council appointed by the Dûrbar on the basis of the principle of strict communal representation.

MR. KOMILEZHATTU SANKARAN (*Nominated*) before submitting his proposals regarding the development of the representative institutions of the State, offered a few remarks about the nature of the problem that had to be tackled and the objects to be achieved thereby. In the first place, the problem that confronted the State was not the same as the problem in British India. In Travancore there was a monarchy represented by an ancient Royal Family, enjoying the loving homage and loyalty of all classes of people. As in Great Britain and other constitutional monarchies, the prestige and the authority of the throne had to be left untouched so that it might

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serve as the symbol of unity and national solidarity. As this aspect of the problem was unknown to the people of British India, their constitutional development could not always serve as an example to the people of Travancore. Secondly, the wide divergence between the interests of the rulers and the ruled alleged to exist in British India, did not exist in Travancore. The object of constitutional reform here was not so much to check the harmful propensities of the officers as to help them with the clear trend of popular opinion and to make provisions for effective ventilation of grievances and efficient prevention of mal-administration. Another special feature of the problem as it related to the State, was the communal aspect of it. A foreign Government could afford to ignore all the petty social differences of the people and to administer justice between man and man more impartially than local officers who were born and brought up with all the traditional ideas and ideals associated with caste and religion. The prime object of constitutional development in the Travancore State was to alter the constitution so as to adjust the representation and control of the various communities in the administration of the country in accordance with their numerical strength.

With regard to the first question, *viz.*, the preservation of the sanctity of the throne, the member said that so long as the Sovereign continued to hold direct personal responsibility and to be the highest executive authority, it would be impossible to avoid the vehement and ungraceful criticism of the people in regard to the actions of the Government. Under the existing system, the traditional devotion and loyalty to the Ruling House was likely to dim in the passion for political struggle. To avoid this, the Sovereign should be relieved of all direct and personal responsibility in the ordinary administration of the State, without however restricting in the least the unlimited power of His Highness the Maha Raja to step in and interfere whenever he deemed it fit to do so. The highest executive authority should be vested in an Executive Council, which should be responsible to His Highness in the administration of the State. The Executive Council should consist of three councillors nominated by His Highness the Maha Raja on the strict principle of communal representation, one of them being a non-official. The Dewan should be the *ex-officio* President of the Council. All matters not expressly reserved for disposal by His Highness should be administered and disposed of by the Executive Council. In matters so reserved His Highness should act through, and in consultation with, the Dewan and His Highness's Private Secretary if there be one. The Dewan should have certain special powers for emergencies.

In regard to the second aspect of the problem, *viz.*, the equalisation of communal rights in the representative bodies, the member said that he did not believe in communal representation as an ideal, but it was necessary to insist on it until the day when the various communities shall live on terms of equality and mutual respect. The member did not want special constituencies for the various communities. The constituencies should be general, with reservation of seats for some,

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In summing up, the member said that there was necessity only for one representative body, say a "Sri Mulam Legislative Assembly" consisting of 100 to 150 members. Franchise should be extended to all adult males and females; two-thirds of the seats should be filled by members of the four major communities *viz.*, Non-caste Hindus, Christians, caste Hindus and Mahomedans, returned by general election, the proportion being fixed on the basis of population; one-sixth of the members should be elected by special constituencies representing the various interests and the municipal bodies and one-sixth of the seats should be filled by nomination. The Assembly should elect, besides its own President, a body of ministers, not less than three in number. The Ministry together with the Executive Council should form a Cabinet, with a non-official majority. The Executive Council would thus be made responsible to this Cabinet.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Sankaran, there seems already to be some difference in the ideal constitution to which representatives here look forward. But, all suggestions are welcome; and it is to be hoped that, with your co-operation and with your helpful suggestions, we shall be able to work out a reform which will be best suited and least objected to by the people of the State.

MR. KOMILEZHATTU SANKARAN (*Nominated*): Sir, as a humble member of this representative Assembly and as the last speaker from among its ranks, I deem it my duty and privilege to express, with your permission, my profound and respectful appreciation of the patient endurance and courtesy with which you, Sir, have listened, without a word of interruption, to our representations containing many an unpalatable truth which has been driven home to your mind by some of our speakers. This sense of responsibility and the spirit of discipline which are but a few of the many traits of British character convey to us their own lessons and the extremely sincere and most business-like manner in which you have been guiding the deliberations of this session have mainly contributed to its success.

I hope I am not putting it too high when I venture to say that I feel here the presence of one of the wisest and most far-seeing statesmen to talk to us on terms of equality, and not to dictate to us from high above. That has been my experience, and I venture to think that, so far as that is concerned, I give expression to the views of many of us in this Assembly.

Sir, we are extremely grateful to His Highness the Maha Raja who was graciously pleased to announce that the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly would be placed on a statutory basis with enlarged functions and powers. And, in considering the scheme of reforms in this direction speaking with a full sense of responsibility and with full appreciation of the administrative situation in Travancore, may I make an

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earnest appeal to you, Sir, to make it possible for the people of Travancore at the present moment to apply their minds to a consideration of the political problems dispassionately not in the spirit of irritation and bitterness, but in a spirit of hopefulness so that it may not result again in a government of the masses by the classes.

MR. T. A. THOMAS (*Kalkulam taluk, Group II*): Sir, on behalf of the members of the twenty-eighth session of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, I offer you our sincere felicitations and hearty good wishes and request you to convey to His Highness our gracious Maha Raja our feelings of gratitude and loyalty.

The Assembly has been defined by one of your predecessors as "the true embodiment of the direct relations between the administrators and the people of the country; it is the daily contact extending over many days when once every year the people are able to come and lay bare their wants and needs before the Dewan and of being sure of receiving a sympathetic disposal of their representations." We have made several representations on diverse subjects of grave importance and we fully hope they will receive your earnest and sympathetic attention and meet with your prompt disposal. We are quite conscious of our shortcomings and are aware of the fact that more may be expected of us. Some of our representations were good and I will not say others were bad; some were on general subjects, while others were parochial in character; some were on high themes, while others were on humble ones; some were couched in moderate language and others, I dare not say, were truculent; some were long and others were short; and some were learned, while others, I dare not say, were ordinary; some were practical, while others, I am not bold to say, were utopian. Whatever might have been the defects, I can assure you, Sir, that all of us were actuated by the same impulse of doing our very best for the sake of our mother country. It is needless to say that we were very much impressed by your unvarying courtesy, stoic patience and imperturbable temper, and we have not failed to observe that your very grave demeanour was at times relieved by your winning smile that lit up your grave countenance, a smile that gave us a glimpse of your inner soul in which we discovered kindliness and even affability.

Your appointment as the Dewan of Travancore has been hailed by all classes of His Highness's subjects with acclamation. It is a consummation devoutly wished for and ardently prayed for. You have the privilege of belonging to the glorious Civil Service that has been the pride of India and the envy of the world, constituting as it does, the steel frame on which rests the Indian Empire.

What Travancore needs at present is a strong, just and progressive administrator, and the people of Travancore desire to find in him courage, resource, foresight, wisdom and vision. When the whole world is moving forward, Travancore cannot afford to stand still, lest we go to the wall. This State is ripe for many reforms. It is hoped that, under your regime, Travancore will make rapid strides in all directions and secure its legitimate place in the India of the future, a place quite in

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consonance with its enlightenment, its strength, its people, its traditions and its ruler. It is earnestly hoped that you will give us occasion to be known by future generations yet unborn as the maker and moulder of modern Travancore.

The greatest curse, Sir, in this country, it is painful to observe, is communalism. Government in this country, is the largest employer of labour and every community naturally expects its due share in the official loaves and fishes of the State. If I had the power, I would have scrapped communal representation and thrown open the public service to men of the greatest merit, be they of the highest or the lowest classes; but living as we do in times of imperfections, such a thing is not to be dreamt of at present. Then the next best is to devise some effective means of laying down a definite and unerring rule by which each community may have its due share in accordance with its weight, its numbers and its enlightenment. This hydra-headed monster of communalism, that is eating into the very vitals of the State, ought to be scotched without any further loss of time. It will be far better if we all pooled our resources and worked together as brothers for the rehabilitation of our dear country rather than that we should waste our life in fighting against each other and even fighting against what I consider as wind mills.

We are thankful to Government for nominating five ladies as members of the Assembly this year. Women form at least half the population of Travancore and they are men's better halves. No country can progress while their women folk are left in the background. We like to see more of them represented in the Assembly, the Legislative Council, local bodies and other Government and quasi-Government organisations. We are glad to say that the ladies nominated to the Assembly this year acquitted themselves very well and it is our sincere gratification to find that they have made a distinct contribution to the deliberations of this august Assembly.

We very often find that people generally compare Travancore with countries like Mysore, Hyderabad and Baroda. But we would like to see it compared with countries like Denmark, Sweden and Japan.

One word more and I have done. Before we disperse to our distant homes, let us extend to you, Sir, our right hand of fellowship and our blessings with it if you care to have them. Let us assure you, if assurance were wanted, of our hearty support and sincere co-operation with you in your arduous task of administration ; nay more, our hearts will rise like a fountain, night and day, in prayers for your health, your happiness, and your prosperity.

May God be with you.

MR. S. JANARDANAN NAYAR (*Nedumangad taluk*) : We would request you, Sir, to convey our feelings of loyalty to His Highness the Maha Raja and we further thank you for your uniform courtesy and kindness to us.

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DEWAN :

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I shall convey your feelings of loyalty to His Highness the Maha Raja.

Secondly, I want to thank you very much for the nice things you have said about me. I appreciate them very much ; and I appreciate the way in which I have been received here. And, I also want to thank you as members of the Assembly for the quietness and orderliness of the proceedings, and especially for the way in which you have, with very few exceptions, kept within the time-limit. If that had not been done, we would have had to go on till Easter. I am very glad indeed to have had this early opportunity of meeting so many leading citizens of Travancore coming from all parts of the State and of learning the needs and grievances of the people of this State which, in the ordinary way, I would only have learned after weeks or months of touring. This is my first experience of a Popular Assembly, and I must say that the quality of the speeches has impressed me very much. They seem to have been very carefully prepared and well thought out and the suggestions which have been made cannot but be very useful. I am sure there must have been mistakes and deficiencies in my answers; you must put that down to my inexperience. I have not been here five weeks yet ; and in five weeks, I cannot learn everything about all the problems, grievances and needs of the people. But, you may be sure that Government are always prepared to listen to all representations. But it is not every representation that can be answered in the way in which you want them to be answered. Every need cannot be supplied ; Government will do their best, and, as you know, there are two sides to every question. Within the next twelve months, a lot may happen. This Assembly, His Highness has promised, will be reformed. So, we cannot say how and when we meet again. But, I do want to say that it is only with your co-operation, that has been promised by you, with your help and with your suggestions that we can hope to revise the constitution of the Assembly in a way which would be useful to all. I think that is all I have to say.

I declare the Assembly closed.

The Assembly was prorogued at 4-50 P. M.

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